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## ITALIAN SCULPTURE

THREE Italian sculptures purchased by the Museum are now on exhibition in the Room of Recent Accessions. Two of these are portraits: one, a marble relief by Pietro Lombardo; and the other, a terracotta bust by Alessandro Vittoria. The third



THE VISITATION, TERRACOTTA GROUP  
FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1500

piece is a small group in painted terracotta representing The Visitation.

In Quattrocento portraiture there is shown little or no psychological interest in the sitter. The painter or sculptor was occupied chiefly with objective portrayal, was content with outward resemblances, and did not strive, as was done in the Late Renaissance, to render the personality of the sitter by seizing upon some moment of vivid actuality when gesture and expression combined to interpret character. Portraits of the fifteenth century are consequently naïve and frank, sincere and unpretentious. It is this phase of Italian sculpture that is illustrated in the relief ascribed to Pietro Lombardo (see p. 243), the most

important of the sculptors working in Venice in the second half of the Quattrocento.

The relief, which is executed in white marble, beautifully patinated, measures 17½ inches in height by 9 in width, and represents in profile to the left the head and bust of a youth wearing a berretta on his slightly curly hair, and dressed in doublet and a light sleeveless tunic with embroidered bands at the neck and on the shoulders. The identity of the sitter is not known, but his age is given in an inscription placed at the bottom of the panel: XIX · ETATIS · ANNO · The relief is low, yet gives an extraordinary effect of roundness and depth from the subtle distinction of the modeling. The slight undercutting of the profile is a characteristic peculiarity of North Italian sculpture. In the opinion of Dr. Wilhelm Bode, who ascribes our relief to Pietro Lombardo, the portrait was executed about 1490.

Typical of the dignified dramatic portraiture of the sixteenth century is the terracotta bust by Alessandro Vittoria (1525-1608), who has been called the Tintoretto of Venetian sculpture. He was the contemporary of Titian and Veronese, of Sansovino and Palladio. After the death of Sansovino, with whom he had studied, Alessandro became head of the Venetian school and director of all art enterprises. His work, both in terracotta and bronze, is marked by great virtuosity and energetic realism.

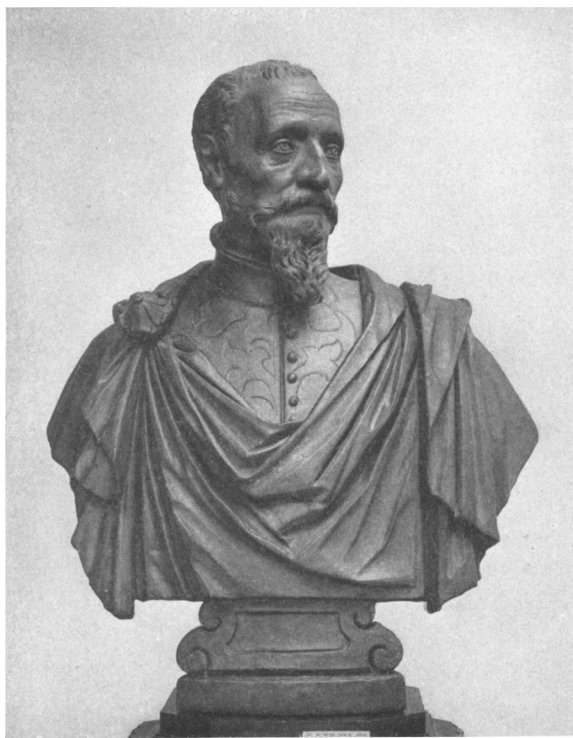
The life-size bust signed A. V. F. (Alessandro Vittoria fecit), recently acquired by the Museum, is a portrait of Simone Contarini (1563-1633), the Venetian diplomat and poet who served the Republic as ambassador at the courts of Turin, Spain, Constantinople, and France. He is represented as a middle-aged man with short curly hair, large mustache, and long, forked beard. His head is turned to the right, and he looks in this direction with a lively expression of interest. He wears a doublet of some figured stuff, buttoned down the front, and over this a cloak fastened on his right shoulder by a large clasp. The arrangement of the drapery is very similar to that in several other busts by Vittoria.

Finally, there remains to be mentioned the painted terracotta group of The Visita-

tion which was shown in the Accession Room last month and continues on exhibition. In this little group, both figures are represented advancing. Saint Elizabeth at the right, bending forward to embrace the Virgin, places her left hand on the

condition and the original polychrome coloring is largely preserved; the fading and softening of the colors have only added to their charm.

Although this little group cannot be ascribed more definitely than to a Florentine



PORTRAIT OF SIMONE CONTARINI  
TERRACOTTA BUST. BY ALESSANDRO VITTORIA

Virgin's shoulder, her elbow held by the Virgin's right hand. The Virgin rests her left hand on Saint Elizabeth's shoulder. The Virgin wears a yellow-green head-cloth, a blue mantle falling in many folds, and a light red dress. Saint Elizabeth's mantle is dark blue lined with yellow; her dress, with long full sleeves, and the scarf which covers her head, a dark blue-green. The base is an irregular semicircle; at the back is a low wall or parapet. This base is painted green. The group, which measures 20 inches in height, is only roughly worked in the back. The piece is in excellent con-

dition about 1500, there can be no doubt as to the unknown sculptor's merits. The modeling is fresh and spirited; the group is composed with easy dignity; and in the expression of sentiment, one feels a true sincerity underlying the gravity of demeanor characteristic of the new feeling for beauty that came in with the early years of the High Renaissance, the classic temper that one finds, for example, embodied in such a masterpiece as *The Visitation* painted by Albertinelli in 1503 and now in the Uffizi at Florence, with which our group should be compared.

J. B.